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The findings of the Mayoral
Community Wealth Building
Commission

Resilient, thriving and healthy

Building community wealth
in York and North Yorkshire



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1. Chair's foreword

Some of the communities of York and North Yorkshire are living through real pain. The cost of living, poverty, work that does not pay enough. Too many people can't afford to stay in the places they grew up in or can't get to a job without a car. Beneath the enormous beauty of our region - its walls, dales, coastline - inequality and division that are deepening, placing social cohesion at risk.

Division across our society didn't happen by accident. It is the result of decades of economic decisions that concentrated wealth, hollowed out local economies, and left communities as bystanders in their own places. Community wealth building is a practical response to a simple question: how do we build an economy that works for the people who live in it and for the planet?

This commission has worked hard and thought carefully. The value of this report will not be measured by how well it is written or how proud we feel as commission members. It will be measured by what happens next. By whether the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA) adopts these recommendations not as aspirations but as commitments.

By whether, in two years' time, we can point to a social investment fund that is backing local businesses, to procurement contracts awarded to local organisations or to workers who are paid enough to live on.

Every recommendation in this report is deliverable. We have reached for what is possible. We have looked at what is working elsewhere in places like Preston and Liverpool, but we are mindful that our recommendations must be deliverable within the context of York and North Yorkshire. We are not reinventing the wheel. We are applying successful case studies to the context of our broad and diverse region. We kept returning to the question: why not here? The answer is: there is no reason why not. There is only the question of will.

York and North Yorkshire deserves an economy that works for everyone who lives in it. That is what this commission has worked towards, and what we are asking YNYCA to deliver.

Sam Leach
Chair, Community Wealth Building Commission



2. Introducing the Mayoral Community Wealth Building Commission in York and North Yorkshire

The Community Wealth Building Commission in York and North Yorkshire is the Mayor's landmark commission and the first of its kind in England. It was launched in August 2025 with a nine month mission to advise the Mayor of York and North Yorkshire on practical interventions and policy measures that can embed community wealth building principles, strengthen economic resilience, and ensure the benefits of the region's economic development are widely shared.

This commission was established to understand more about what is happening to our economy in York and North Yorkshire and how we can make life better for everyone in our region. We wanted to understand what the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority can do to improve transport, particularly in our rural areas, and develop transport solutions that contribute to reduced emissions and a greener future. Small businesses, social enterprise and community organisations are the lifeblood of our region but sometimes, the odds are stacked against them when it comes to finance, information, and ownership – how can we do more to enable them to grow and thrive? Too many of our communities across York and North Yorkshire are excluded from the region's economy as a result of low-income, poor-quality employment, lack of access to public services, and financial insecurity. How can English devolution in an area like York and North Yorkshire give people greater ownership of their economic and social future?

By empowering local businesses, strengthening community involvement in decision making, and creating economic structures that favour local people, the commission aims to lay the groundwork for fairer, healthier, greener, and more prosperous communities across the region.



3. About the commission

The commission has a broad membership base and has brought together nine experts and leaders from community organisations, local business networks, social enterprises, academia, and trade unions. This diverse membership has brought together deep expertise in economic policy, social value, community development, and democratic governance as well as local knowledge relating to the unique context of York and North Yorkshire.

Commission members:



Sam Leach

Chair, Co-founder and Director, Spark York CIC, and Member of York and North Yorkshire Business Board



Jane Colthup

Chief Executive, Community First Yorkshire, and Member of York and North Yorkshire Business Board



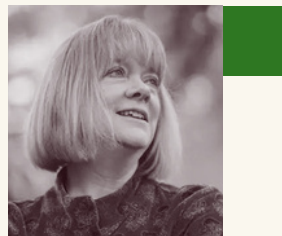
Helen Flynn

Chief Executive, Nidderdale Plus Partnership



Victoria Hughes

York and North-East Regional Programme Lead, Joseph Rowntree Foundation



Kate Pickett

Professor of Epidemiology, University of York



Martin O'Neill

Professor of Political Philosophy, University of York



Dr Owen Powell

Lecturer in Human Resource Management, York St John University



Cllr Matthew Brown

Leader, Preston City Council



Emma Garner

Communication Workers Union



As a commission, we are also grateful for the support and insight that we have received from officers at City of York Council, North Yorkshire Council, and the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA).

The commission has been supported by the Centre for Local Economies (CLES), a think tank and charity. CLES has led the development and implementation of community wealth building in the UK. CLES has provided the commission with expert briefings and analysis to help inform the thematic focus of the commission meetings. This has drawn on CLES' experience of working with government at all levels to understand and implement community wealth building. The thematic areas that the commission explored were predetermined within the terms of reference of the commission, and they encompassed:

- Employment and fair work
- Anchor institutions and procurement
- Democratic ownership of assets and enterprises, including:
 - A regional plan for community-owned assets
 - A co-operative and worker ownership hub
 - A publicly owned bus operator
 - A regional bank, or financial institution, to support local lending, investment, and community enterprise.



A copy of the terms of reference can be found in appendix 1 of this report.

4. The commission's ambition for community wealth building in York and North Yorkshire

The commission's ambition is for a regional economy that delivers good outcomes for people's quality of life. An economy that generates good health, lifts communities out of poverty and enables people to live a life they value. This is about delivering an inclusive approach to investment; an approach that recognises that the way we intervene in the economy to support community organisations, businesses, encourage responsible investment, and prioritise sectoral advantages must build on, not ignore, the unique heritage, culture and ambition of our diverse places.

There must be a recognition and value given to the contribution that all parts of our economy, including the role that our public services and our social economy play in supporting our potential and vitality. We need a strategic approach, owned by the region's communities, rather than imposed by disconnected investors and policymakers.



4.1 The need for alternatives

We live in a time of great uncertainty. The cost-of-living crisis continues, levels of poverty are growing, years of austerity and a lack of investment in critical infrastructure, such as transport, have all taken their toll on the York and North Yorkshire region. Too many communities feel excluded, left behind by economic prosperity and geographically isolated. Challenging times require us to maintain hope in the art of the possible. As commission members it seems like the right time for us to double our efforts in the pursuit of an economy that doesn't just grow but delivers inclusion. Community wealth building, as a strategic approach to economic development, can enable YNYCA to use available mechanisms to increase the flow, circulation, and democratic ownership of our region's wealth.

Economic policy making can feel dry and remote, characterised by a reliance upon statistics and rhetoric. As a commission we think that we have the opportunity in York and North Yorkshire to transform the narrative to a language of change and delivery. Community wealth building recognises that as a region, we have good quality public services, we have unique natural wealth, we have great businesses, we have resilient communities who work hard to deliver change in the places they live. Yet, despite this, not everyone experiences the benefits of wealth. Too many children have a poor start in life and too many people, despite being in work, don't make enough to pay the rent and their bills.

Community wealth building gives us an alternative approach to address these challenges by rewiring our local economies from within.

4.2 The building blocks for community wealth and power

Community wealth building is a people-centred approach to local economic development that increases the flow, circulation, and ownership of wealth. It originated in the US through the work of the Democracy Collaborative in Cleveland, Ohio, and is also influenced by other alternative economic movements, such as the Mondragon co-operatives of the Basque Country. In the UK, CLES¹ was inspired by Cleveland and worked with local authorities in the UK, including Manchester, Preston, and Belfast, to explore how it could be adapted to the UK context. This led to the formation of the five-pillar model, which CLES has used extensively with organisations across the UK and beyond. This has resulted in community wealth building becoming mainstreamed in many public sector organisations across the UK, and is to be enshrined in law in the forthcoming Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Act.

The purpose of community wealth building is to build an economy that grows good outcomes for people, such as improvements in health, growth in skills and education, growth in the agency of communities to support and care for each other, and growth in decent public services such as transport and housing. It also means an economy that works in the public interest to alleviate some of the challenges faced in areas like York and North Yorkshire, such as rural isolation, unaffordable energy costs, and in work poverty. At the core of community wealth building is the question of equity and democracy: who owns the wealth that an economy creates, who benefits from the growth, and who gets a say in how it is distributed?² Therefore, community wealth building is not only an economic development approach but a values-based strategy, rooted in commitments to equality and democracy. These values matter because more equal and more democratically shaped local economies are better able to support sustainability, strengthen resilience in the face of shocks, and foster the social cohesion on which long-term prosperity depends.

1.The history of community wealth building in the UK, CLES. Available: <https://cles.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CWB-a-history-FINAL2.pdf>

2.Joe Guinan and Martin O'Neill, The case for community wealth building (Cambridge: Polity, 2020).

Community wealth building is a practical, people centred-approach to reshaping your local economy. It is built on five principles or pillars to help identify practical ways for organisations to maximise the flow, circulation, and ownership of wealth.



CLES analysis, 2026

They can be used by councils and anchor institutions to build an economy that works for everyone, characterised by broadly owned wealth, a fairer, more resilient economy, a sustainable future, stronger communities and good lives.

5. The context of York and North Yorkshire

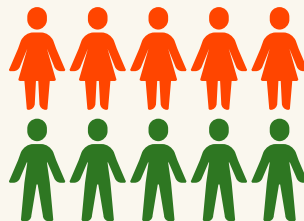
York and North Yorkshire is the first combined authority to encompass large rural, coastal, and urban landscapes. Our region spans more than 3,000 square miles, covers 6% of England, and is home to nearly one million people.

As a commission, we recognise that the mix of rural, coastal, and urban communities makes York and North Yorkshire incredibly diverse and therefore the policy responses need to be multifaceted to reflect the variety of places in the region. Through our discussions we have considered these regional differences, particularly the 'super sparse' nature of many of our rural communities.³

Our diverse geography has also created a diverse regional economy. Both the YNYCA Economic Framework (2024)⁴ and the York and North Yorkshire Local Growth Plan (2025)⁵ recognise that although York and North Yorkshire has some of the most desirable places to live, work and visit, the benefits of living and working within region are not felt equally across all our residents.



6% of England



nearly 1m residents



3,000 square miles



3. Rural North Yorkshire: The way forward. The findings and recommendations of the Rural Commission, July 2021.

4. Economic Framework, YNYCA, 2024. Available: <https://yorknorthyorks-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Economic-Framework-3rd-October-2024.pdf>

5. York and North Yorkshire Local Growth Plan, YNYCA, 2025. Available: <https://yorknorthyorks-ca.gov.uk/our-strategy/localgrowthplan/>

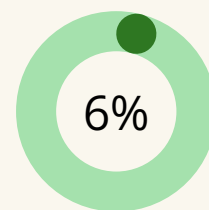
1.1 The barriers to an inclusive economy in York and North Yorkshire

1.1.1 Systemic inequalities

Inequalities across York and North Yorkshire take multiple forms - economic, geographic, health-related, and social. Although York and North Yorkshire appears comparatively prosperous at a regional level, we know that this affluence masks significant disparities between communities and different demographic groups at a local level, for example:



For men, there is a 13-year gap for life expectancy⁶ between the healthiest and unhealthiest communities; and a 12-year gap for women.



6% of neighbourhoods in York and North Yorkshire are in the 20% most deprived in England.⁷

1.1.2 Poor access to transport

Access to transport is a key challenge for many communities across the region. Part of the challenge is the vastly rural geography of York and North Yorkshire, with many rural communities, dependent upon car ownership and without access to public transport. These higher rates of car dependency often result in more single-occupancy trips, longer driving distances, and higher levels of emissions. Where public transport is available, it is often unreliable, includes extended journey times, and is expensive, making it unaffordable for many residents. One of the ways in which communities in York and North Yorkshire have adapted to this challenge has been to develop effective systems of community transport, which help to plug the gaps in provision. However, these schemes often face challenges in terms of sustainable long-term funding and co-terminosity with traditional public transport services.

The gaps in transport connectivity are a significant contributor to the inequalities between communities. Many residents are unable to reach services easily, from employment and training to social opportunities, all of which are important for health and wellbeing, and the resilience of residents.

⁶. York and North Yorkshire Local Growth Plan, YNYCA, 2025. Available: <https://yorknorthyorks-ca.gov.uk/our-strategy/localgrowthplan/>.
⁷. Ibid

5.1.3 Availability and affordability of housing

Housing challenges in York and North Yorkshire are shaped by a combination of high demand, limited supply, affordability pressures, and rurality. This makes access to affordable housing, for purchase and for rent, increasingly unattainable for our residents, particularly our younger people and lower income workers. Pressure on accommodation, as a result of the visitor economy, exacerbates pressure on the availability of housing through proliferation of second home ownership and demand for short-term visitor lets. This not only reduces the number of available homes for residents but can also encourage speculative behaviour and financial extraction.

5.1.2 Demographic challenges

As a commission we are acutely aware of the significant demographic pressures within our region driven by a rapidly ageing population and outward migration of our younger generations, combined with a shrinking working age cohort. We believe that this challenge is particularly felt within our rural communities, where almost one in four residents (24%) are already aged 65 or over, with this projected to rise by 31% by 2043. These demographic changes combined with other barriers to inclusive growth are placing growing demand on housing, health, social care, and transport services, as well as resulting in difficulties maintaining vibrant local communities.

5.1.3 Fairer wages particularly for lower income families

For many residents, work does not provide sufficient income, with wage levels in York and North Yorkshire lagging behind when compared to the English national average.⁹ The labour market analysis report estimates the average weekly wage in the region to be £667 compared to the national average for England of £732 weekly; and, 13% of workers in the region are still paid below the Real Living Wage.¹⁰

Commuting patterns indicate that many of our residents work outside the region.¹¹ Early retirement and long-term sickness are also contributing to higher economic inactivity, when compared to national levels.¹² The YNYCA Economic Framework suggests that those at the lower end of the income scale are also likely to suffer more from mobility issues and rurality.

8. York and North Yorkshire Labour Market Analysis, Y-PERN, 2025. Available <https://yorknorthyorks-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Labour-Market-Analysis-YNKYA-July-2025.pdf>.

9. Ibid.

10. Economic Framework, York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority, August 2024. Available: <https://yorknorthyorks-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Economic-Framework-3rd-October-2024.pdf>.

11. York and North Yorkshire Labour Market Analysis, Y-PERN, 2025. Available: <https://yorknorthyorks-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Labour-Market-Analysis-YNKYA-July-2025.pdf>.

12. Ibid.

5.1.6 Improving digital connectivity

A lack of robust digital connectivity across York and North Yorkshire hinders economic growth, limits business productivity, and constrains opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

In rural and coastal areas, limited digital infrastructure also reduces access to skills, remote work, online services, and investment, creating disparities between well-connected urban centres like York and more remote communities.

5.1.7 Environmental sustainability

York and North Yorkshire has a huge wealth of natural assets and strengths including two national parks, three areas of outstanding natural beauty, a nationally important coastline, and nationally important sites of biodiversity. As a region we are also facing significant environmental and net zero challenges, including the need to rapidly scale our renewable energy infrastructure, retrofit our existing housing stock, and reduce high transport emissions. We have an ambitious commitment to become England's first carbon negative region by 2040; however, we must ensure that all our communities benefit from these plans.

5.2 A time of global insecurity

Although, as a commission, we want to emphasise the unique context of York and North Yorkshire, we are writing this report at a time of significant global insecurity – from the conflict in Iran and instability across the Gulf region, to the ongoing repercussions of the war in Ukraine – we believe that this further strengthens the case for building resilient, locally rooted economies.

The war in Iran triggered major energy market shocks, fuelling inflation and intensifying household pressures worldwide. At the same time, the war in Ukraine continues to disrupt global food and energy supply chains, amplifying socio-economic losses and worsening affordability challenges across regions, particularly in Europe and the Global South. These overlapping crises are taking their toll on populations that were already strained by the aftermath of the global pandemic, which weakened global economic recovery and exposed deep vulnerabilities in supply chains and public services.

For the UK, our vulnerability is clear. We are heavily exposed to volatile global energy markets and long, fragile supply chains. When shocks hit, these additional costs quickly flow through to households, in the form of higher bills, rising food prices and economic insecurity.

This continuing flux reveals the fragility of over-centralised, extractive economic systems and reinforces the case for community wealth building, where strengthened local production and robust foundational sectors would prioritise resilience, equity, and long-term place-based prosperity.

The real lesson is that resilience is not an afterthought, it must be designed into our local and regional economies, through approaches such as community wealth building.

6. Our recommendations

As a commission, we want to be bold and challenging. We think that our findings demonstrate that community wealth building can be used to deliver both our ambition and YNYCA's core vision of healthy and thriving communities across York and North Yorkshire.

We believe that community wealth building provides YNYCA with a way to shape and deliver ambitious regional strategic plans, as well as being a set of practical implementation tools to develop and refine place-based interventions for the rural, coastal, and urban communities across our region.

Most of our recommendations relate to the predefined topic areas that were outlined within the terms of reference of the commission (appendix 1). However, our first recommendation relates to the opportunity that the mayor and the combined authority have to embed community wealth building as a cross-cutting, holistic approach to planning and delivering their regional ambitions for York and North Yorkshire.

The majority of the recommendations are directly within the 'gift' of YNYCA to deliver. However, a number of the recommendations and associated actions are considered to be longer-term strategic ambitions. Others will require YNYCA to adopt a leadership and advocacy role, that will catalyse change with key regional partners from across the public, private and VCSE sectors.

To support the implementation of our recommendations, we have developed action plans that detail short-, medium-, and long-term implementation measures and timeframes. The action plans can be found within appendix 2. We have also developed a basic monitoring and evaluation framework that can be used by YNYCA to measure their initial progress against our recommendations.

The commission believes that these recommendations and action plans provide a durable implementation framework for community wealth building in York and North Yorkshire; that is both practically credible and institutionally resilient. We also consider that our recommendations will form the basis of a practical programme for embedding equity and democracy more deeply within the regional economy of York and North Yorkshire.



6.1 Our Key Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The mayor and YNYCA should adopt community wealth building as their overarching framework to deliver inclusive growth, and as a broader mechanism to underpin their approach to delivering their ambitious strategic plans for the region, of a “trailblazing City Region Rural Powerhouse, driving growth for the UK in the North”,

Recommendation 2

YNYCA, together with anchor partners, both public and private from across the region, should recognise the importance of using commissioning and procurement alongside social value in driving economic inclusion across York and North Yorkshire. This should be reflected in how they design services and inform their public sector procurement policy and practice. This is also supported by the UK government's procurement legislation and the Civil Society Covenant.

Recommendation 3

YNYCA should establish a York and North Yorkshire land commission with a multi-strand remit covering community ownership, housing, and renewable energy. A formal land commission would play a key strategic role in shaping how land is owned, used, governed, and valued within our region. A land commission would help to broker solutions that address the conflicting demands on land including housing need, agriculture, hospitality, and tourism and environmental ecosystem management.

	Convening for economic and social change through anchor collaboration Recommendation 4 YNYCA should convene a regional anchor network of public and private anchor organisations from across York and North Yorkshire. Members of the network should commit to utilising their financial power and influence to direct wealth into the local economy, through the five community wealth building levers outlined in this report.				
	Strengthening democratic ownership Recommendation 5 YNYCA should address the role of the social economy in underpinning the wider economy of York and North Yorkshire being undervalued. We should build on the recognition within YNYCA's Economic Framework, the Local Growth Plan, and the associated delivery plans, of the role and economic contribution that the social economy is making. Increasing this recognition will be key to unlocking sector opportunities and contributing to the Local Growth Plan ambitions. Recommendation 6 YNYCA should establish a community wealth building hub, which would deliver specialist services to support and grow co-operatives, social and community enterprises, and employee-owned businesses. This coordinated support would strengthen the ecosystem for alternative business models and increase the visibility and impact of socially productive organisations across the region. A community wealth building hub could form a specialist support service within YNYCA's growth hub's broader business support 'offer'. Recommendation 7 YNYCA should develop a consistent regional rate relief policy that would include mandatory business rate relief for social enterprises, voluntary, and community sector organisations.				

	Widening access and improving service delivery through publicly owned transport Recommendation 8 YNYCA should use their devolved powers to adopt a fully integrated approach to transport planning and integration across York and North Yorkshire. This holistic approach must include sustainable investment mechanisms and funding, co-ordination of scheduled services and community transport, a review of mass transit options, and the longer-term potential of municipal ownership to address gaps in transport infrastructure across the region.				
	Leveraging local investment Recommendation 9 The mayor and YNYCA should convene a programme of discussions with the leaders of the North Yorkshire Local Government Pension Authority and negotiate an agreement with the authority to develop a regional investment portfolio of at least 10%, to support investments in areas such as local housing, housing retrofit, and renewable energy. Recommendation 10 YNYCA should adopt a community wealth building lens to strategic investment in the region. This generative inward investment approach would invite investors to clarify how they contribute to the long-term ambition of a healthy, resilient, and thriving York and North Yorkshire. It would include a prospectus of key social value asks to ensure that there is alignment of environment, social and governance (ESG) goals and social/economic challenges as outlined in the Local Growth Plan. Recommendation 11 YNYCA should establish a social economy investment fund, similar to those provided within the Liverpool city region and the north-east, to further strengthen and grow the social economy across the region. An investment fund will allow social economy organisations greater access to start-up and growth funding.				

	Recommendation 12 YNYCA should establish a regional task force that would oversee a feasibility study of a regional mutual bank for York and North Yorkshire. A regional mutual bank would support local lending and investment to our SMEs and micro-businesses, as well as our VCSE sector.				
	Championing decent work Recommendation 13 YNYCA should work with trade unions, public, private, and third sector organisations to raise the standard of employment, pay, and reward across the region. YNYCA should target the key employment sectors outlined in the Local Growth Plan - health and social care, retail and the visitor economy - as these are traditionally lower income sectors. Recommendation 14 YNYCA should commit to attaining Real Living Wage accreditation within the next 18 months. YNYCA should use this status to support other public sector organisations to take steps to attain Real Living Wage accreditation.				
	Future of the commission Recommendation 15 The mayor of York and North Yorkshire should extend the tenure of the Mayoral Community Wealth Building Commission until a permanent governance structure, such as a Community Wealth Building Advisory and Accountability Panel, is put in place.				
	The following sections of this report will outline our discussions and recommendations in detail.				

7. Community wealth building as an underpinning framework to build healthy and thriving communities in York and North Yorkshire

As a commission, we consider that community wealth building offers a feasible strategic and delivery mechanism to realise the mayor's ambition of helping to create a region where people can thrive - where good health, good jobs, and a good quality of life are part of everyday experience.

We think that there are a variety of 'hooks' within YNYCA's Economic Framework and Local Growth Plan that legitimise, even mandate, a commitment to community wealth building, for example the narrative in the following infographic, which summarises YNYCA's Economic Framework:



The Economic Framework also states that:

“Community wealth building approaches have the potential to unlock and enable local expertise, knowledge, lived experience, assets and innovation to reduce inequalities, create opportunities and retain more wealth and opportunity for the benefit of local people.”

And:

“The success of an economy should not just be measured alone by how fast or how aggressively it grows, but also by how well wealth is created and shared”.

The Local Growth Plan, adds:

“For York and North Yorkshire, it’s about growth benefitting businesses, communities and the environment. Within this approach, economic growth is not the end point, but a means to achieving greater wellbeing for people, particularly through increased quality of life. By focussing on inclusive growth, there are massive health outcomes that could be achieved, as high quality and secure jobs, alongside access to services (e.g. housing, transport), are key determinants of people’s health and wellbeing.”

We have evaluated that committing to and utilising community wealth building as a primary framework would also require major strategies and funds to demonstrate how they are contributing to community wealth building outcomes.

Our expectation is that this approach would then be reflected in a variety of policy areas such as:

- How the Local Growth Fund is being allocated
- How business support services are being developed and delivered
- A commitment to community wealth building within YNYCA's new corporate plan
- The local transport plan
- The ambition of building and developing new housing schemes
- The approach to investment across competitive advantage sectors, the priority drivers of growth and the key employment sectors; as detailed in the Local Growth Plan
- The transition to carbon negative and the growth of the green economy
- Ambition 2035; Growth with purpose

As commissioners, we are concerned that without this overarching commitment to community wealth building, the implementation of the recommendations and actions within this report could be piecemeal and peripheral. The commitment to community wealth building by YNYCA will also contribute to the durability of the approach, beyond one mayoralty.

	Recommendation 1	
	The mayor and YNYCA should adopt community wealth building as their overarching framework to deliver inclusive growth, and as a broader mechanism to underpin their approach to delivering their ambitious strategic plans for the region, of a “trailblazing City Region Rural Powerhouse, driving growth for the UK in the North”.	



To guarantee longer-term impact, community wealth building needs to become part of the institutional fabric of YNYCA, and we have developed a detailed set of actions, contained in appendix 2, that would support this process. The actions include securing permanent and dedicated capacity and associated resource to lead and embed community wealth building across YNYCA, and establishing a community wealth building steering group to ensure that robust cross-directorate governance is implemented.

8. Re-imagining procurement and commissioning as a driver of economic prosperity in York and North Yorkshire

Progressive procurement is a key pillar of community wealth building, and it is often an important starting point for public sector organisations who are developing a community wealth building approach to economic development. Typically, this includes analysing and mapping local and regional spend and exploring how they can develop local supply chains.

Insight from officers at YNYCA highlighted the role that procurement can play in shaping local and regional economic development and inclusive growth. Within their updated procurement strategy, they outlined that they are planning to:

- Encourage and mandate the use of local suppliers
- Encourage and mandate the use of local materials
- Encourage fair working, such as paying the living wage
- Support SME and VCSE organisations to access contracts
- Encourage consortia development
- Create jobs, apprenticeships, and work with local schools, colleges and universities
- Create KPIs to visibly see the progress and intervene where this is not happening



Commissioners evaluated that YNYCA is already developing a 'roadmap' of activities to implement and embed community wealth building into procurement and social value. However, YNYCA's procurement strategy is still in a relatively early phase of development.

As a commission, we consider that baseline spending data analyses should be undertaken by YNYCA and other key public sector anchor institutions in the region. This information would allow YNYCA and anchor partners to understand how public investment is circulating in the region and to identify areas of influenceable spend. The baseline data should also be used to measure and highlight progress in the longer-term.

YNYCA should also ensure that the updated procurement strategy recognises the importance of the SME and micro business sectors, including trading VCSE organisations, from across the region and the importance of ensuring that there is equitable access to public sector supply chains.

Commissioners consider that there is a role for YNYCA to act as a leader and strategic influencer, for the local authorities and other anchor institutions in the region, including the NHS, to create a different way of approaching and delivering procurement. In doing so, it would raise the standard of how goods and services are procured and commissioned across the region and transform relationships with suppliers and the wider supplier market. There is a particular role for YNYCA in working with its two constituent local authorities to develop a systemic approach to engaging with local businesses and suppliers, including those from the VCSE sector.

In developing their social value policy, we ask that YNYCA consider sustainability, and how it can be used to align their objectives relating to green jobs and climate change mitigation within procurement and commissioning processes.

The commission believes that there is a proactive role for YNYCA in identifying where there are 'gaps in the market', which could be filled by inclusive ownership models such as worker-owned co-operatives. Other regional anchor institutions could also then buy goods and services from these organisations.

Throughout our broader debates, the commission has discussed the existing business support services that are available in the region, and questioned how they are helping local businesses to find out and access procurement opportunities. If we want to develop local supply chains, we need SME, micro, and VCSE sectors that know about, and are ready to take, these opportunities.

Recommendation 2

YNYCA, together with anchor partners, both public and private from across the region, should recognise the importance of using commissioning and procurement alongside social value in driving economic inclusion across York and North Yorkshire. This should be reflected in how they design services and inform their public sector procurement policy and practice. This is also supported by the UK government's procurement legislation and the Civil Society Covenant.

The power of using procurement with economic, social, and environmental intent should be acknowledged within YNYCA's Economic Framework, Local Growth Plan, and the associated delivery plans.

The combined authority should use its convening power to broker a York and North Yorkshire statement of social value priorities, which reflect the barriers to economic inclusion, and to which public and private sector organisations work together to support and deliver.

Recommendation 3

YNYCA should establish a York and North Yorkshire land commission with a multi-strand remit covering community ownership, housing, and renewable energy. A formal land commission would play a key strategic role in shaping how land is owned, used, governed, and valued within our region. A land commission would help to broker solutions that address the conflicting demands on land including housing need, agriculture, hospitality, and tourism and environmental ecosystem management.

The power of using procurement with economic, social, and environmental intent should be acknowledged within YNYCA's Economic Framework, Local Growth Plan, and the associated delivery plans. The combined authority should use its convening power to broker a York and North Yorkshire statement of social value priorities, which reflect the barriers to economic inclusion, and to which public and private sector organisations work together to support and deliver.



The action plan that supports these recommendations, and our discussions outlined in the section above, can be found in appendix 2.

9. Leading and championing community ownership across the region

Community ownership of assets is fundamental to community wealth building because it transforms local people from passive recipients of economic outcomes into active stewards of the wealth generated in their place. When communities own land, buildings, energy infrastructure, or other key assets, they anchor economic value locally, preventing it from being extracted by external landlords or investors. This ownership also creates long-term, democratically controlled income streams that can be reinvested into local priorities – whether that's affordable housing, business incubation, green energy, or social infrastructure.

Community ownership also builds resilience by giving residents real power to shape development, protect essential spaces from speculative pressures, and ensure assets serve collective rather than commercial interests.

Through our research and discussions, we know that community ownership in York and North Yorkshire continues to expand, helping our local communities take control of vital buildings, housing, and energy infrastructure. This growth has been driven, in part, by national funding programmes such as the Community Ownership Fund (COF) as well as new local funding streams, combined with strong support networks.



Despite the successes there are a number of key challenges to community ownership in our region, namely:

- Capital and revenue funding – high purchase and retrofit costs, limited revenue security
- Skills gaps – many groups lack long-term asset management and governance capacity
- Competition for assets – including short sale windows
- Outlay costs for energy projects – many communities cannot accumulate the funding necessary to invest in locally owned energy infrastructure, and retrofitting older buildings needs significant investment for decarbonisation

Evidence has shown that many of our communities looking to buy assets are accessing support from national organisations such as Plunkett and Locality, as well as accessing local peer support, which is seen to be incredibly valuable. On the whole, the support available is seen to be good. However, many community organisations have limited capacity to engage with support on offer.

Our discussions have also highlighted that the closure of the COF is significant, and it leaves a gap in the funding landscape for community purchases.

As a commission, we have also explored the risks and liabilities of community ownership, and it was acknowledged that communities often don't have access to on-going support to ensure that their projects are successful in the long-term.

We consider that there are significant opportunities for community ownership in York and North Yorkshire in sectors such as:

- Community Land Trusts (CLTs)
- Co-operative housing
- Co-housing
- Community ownership of venues
- Community energy schemes
- Community ownership of pubs; as they are part of the social infrastructure of towns, villages and rural communities

Within the terms of reference of the commission, we were asked to review the feasibility and deliverability of:

“A regional plan for community-owned assets, supporting the transfer and management of assets such as pubs, community centres, infrastructure and services into community hands.”

As a commission, we view this as an area in which we need to raise the ambition of the YNYCA, and rather than developing a regional plan for community ownership of assets, we want to advocate for the formation of a York and North Yorkshire land commission, which would have a remit over community ownership, housing, and renewable energy. A formal land commission would play a key strategic role in shaping how land is owned, used, governed and valued within our region. We believe that it would bring clarity, coherence and long-term direction to land policy, driving fairer, more sustainable, and more inclusive economic outcomes.

The commission’s remit should include:

- Mapping publicly owned and underused land across the region, drawing on the approach taken by Liverpool City Region in 2020, to identify opportunities for productive use aligned with community wealth building goals
- Identifying sites suitable for community land trusts, community-led housing, and local authority housing development, and supporting a pipeline of projects from identification through to delivery
- Assessing the potential of publicly owned land for renewable energy generation, exploring community, municipal, and cooperative ownership models, and seeking opportunities to partner with GB Energy and the National Wealth Fund
- Supporting a pipeline of community asset transfers, and identifying the capacity, technical support, and funding needed to enable communities to take ownership.
- Assessing the use of mayoral acquisition powers to transition vacant commercial properties to community or local authority ownership

As a Community Wealth Building Commission, we evaluate that a land commission would provide an integrated framing, which would bring together community housing, renewable energy, and community ownership under a single institutional umbrella. It would create a natural and powerful link between YNYCA’s land, housing, and energy agendas, ensuring that publicly owned assets serve community wealth building goals rather than simply being disposed of at market value.

	Recommendation 3 YNYCA should establish a York and North Yorkshire land commission with a multi-strand remit covering community ownership, housing, and renewable energy. A formal land commission would play a key strategic role in shaping how land is owned, used, governed, and valued within our region. A land commission would help to broker solutions that address the conflicting demands on land including housing need, agriculture, hospitality, and tourism and environmental ecosystem management.	
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Our action plan, within appendix 2, provides a detailed roadmap for YNYCA and key partners, such as North Yorkshire Council and City of York Council, to implement our recommendation.

10. Convening for economic and social change through anchor collaboration

As the challenges facing the UK deepen and multiply, the institutions in our towns, cities, and regions are increasingly motivated to work collectively to influence the creation of better lives for people in the places they serve. This is happening in policy circles too, as we are seeing a resurgence in the idea that public money should work more explicitly in the interests of local communities. As a commission, we think that there are opportunities to use public money with greater intent, in the interests of place-based economic, social, and environmental challenges.

10.1 Anchor institutions

CLES defines anchor institutions as:¹³

Locally rooted organisations with a significant and stable presence in a location and with economic, social, and ecological influence as purchasers of goods and services, as employers and as owners of land, property, and financial assets within the area. Traditionally, this definition has been applied to public institutions such as local authorities, the NHS organisations, housing associations and higher and further education. However, increasingly, organisations in the private and VCSE sectors, who are tied to particular places (historically or commercially) are beginning to play a role.



¹³ More information on how to build an anchor network here: <https://cles.org.uk/how-to-build-an-anchor-network/>

10.2 What is an anchor network?

An anchor network is a group of anchor institutions that come together to work collectively for the benefit of a place. Working in this way allows the institutions to share resources, devise solutions to shared problems, combine their different strengths, share good practice, and magnify their individual efforts.

Research undertaken for the commission has indicated the variation in the shape, size, and composition of the anchor networks: there are number of region-wide networks with over 200 members, networks in cities with fewer than ten member organisations focusing primarily on the public sector, formal networks that contribute money towards a co-ordinator or sign an annual agreement, and informal networks that come together on an issue-by-issue basis. Some networks operate within city boundaries; some have had more success with environmental projects and others with procurement.

We consider that YNYCA has a significant role to play in bringing anchor institutions together from across the region. This role includes convening the anchor network as well as cajoling anchor partners to be members of a network, and a role in driving the momentum of the network.

As commissioners, particularly those of us that are based in York and North Yorkshire, we consider that there is a role for both public sector and private sector organisations to be part of an anchor network. There is a unique ecosystem, particularly around York, with a long history of local business delivering economic and social benefits to workers and communities.

Our research has also started to provide an indication of the 'size of the prize'. Analysing spend and employment data has shown that just six of our anchor institutions (YNYCA, City of York Council, North Yorkshire Council, York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, York St John University and University of York) have an annual spend of over £1.2bn and employ almost 30,000 staff.¹⁴

¹⁴Figures calculated by CLES using publicly available data sources.

The commission evaluates that there are several potential areas that an anchor network could explore, including:

- Living wage employment
- Local recruitment
- Democratic ownership
- Local spend
- Local skills development
- Sustainability and environmental projects

However, in developing an anchor network, there needs to be a clear statement of intent around the purpose of the network. We recognise that the first year of an anchor network is often an exploratory phase, but we think that participating organisations could sign up or commit to a one-year launch commitment, which could evolve into a wider community wealth building statement of commitment in the future.

As a first step, we consider that YNYCA should identify an initial small group of ‘principal’ anchors and identify senior leaders and lead officers within each organisation. Working together the ‘principal’ anchors should agree their first-year priorities, which should also include agreeing three joint pilots – for example on procurement, good work, and community assets.

	Recommendation 4	
	YNYCA should convene a regional anchor network of public and private anchor organisations from across York and North Yorkshire. Members of the network should commit to utilising their financial power and influence to direct wealth into the local economy, through the five community wealth building levers outlined in this report.	



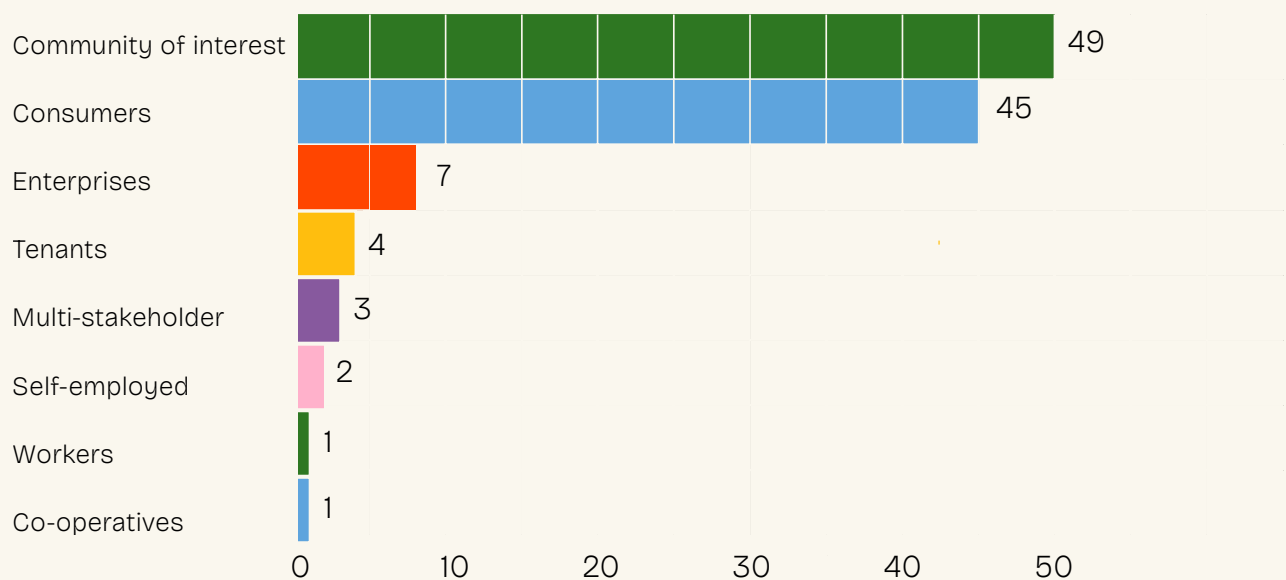
Within appendix 2, we have prepared an action plan that builds on our recommendation and provides YNYCA with a clear pathway to develop an anchor network for the region.

11. Strengthening democratic ownership through the creation of a co-operative and worker ownership development hub

In exploring the feasibility of creating of a co-operative and worker ownership development hub, to support co-operative and employee ownership transitions, we have considered several possibilities. We recognise that co-operatives, worker co-ops and employee-owned businesses are vital elements of community wealth building, as they hard-wire democratic ownership, local control, and equitable distribution of wealth into the economy.

Our research into co-operatives within York and North Yorkshire has indicated that there are 111 co-operatives in the region:

Co-ops 2025: Number of co-operatives by type



Source: CLES 2025



There are a number of benefits associated with co-operative and employee-owned models, including that:

- Co-operative models and employee ownership give people a say in how a business is run, as well as enabling them to share in its success. Businesses also benefit from having worker/employee owners, fostering a culture that empowers people to increase performance and impact.
- As their staff are personally invested, co-operatives and employee-owned businesses tend to be resilient and high-performing, with high levels of staff retention. Additional reported benefits include a workforce with better mental health, more confidence, and sense of purpose, which drives innovation and business growth.
- Increasing co-operative and employee ownership benefits the wider community through creating a fairer, more inclusive and resilient regional economy. These businesses usually invest more in training and skills development, pay a fair basic wage, address inequality, diversity and inclusion, and are more likely to provide community support, make charitable donations, and work to improve environmental sustainability.
- They also tend to be more stable in economic downturns, more committed to local supply chains, and more aligned with social and environmental goals.

Research by the Employee Ownership Association estimates that in 2025 the UK has approximately 2,470 employee-owned businesses¹⁵, however a breakdown of this data is not available at a regional level.

The development of a co-operative and worker ownership hub is not a new idea, and currently there are three ownership hub models operating in the UK: in London, South Yorkshire and the West Midlands. Although each of the hub models vary slightly in terms of the sectors they support, they have all been responsible for raising awareness and working with partners to create a favourable environment, in which democratic businesses can start, grow, and thrive.

Through our discussions, we have highlighted the thriving social economy sector that we have within York and North Yorkshire, and when we talk about our social economy, we are really focusing on those VCSE sector organisations that are trading, rather than those that are grant dependent. We have particularly considered our social enterprise sector, which is growing in both numbers and capacity, and we consider that there is a broader opportunity to develop a specialist support ecosystem for our social enterprise sector, as well as co-operatives development and employee ownership. Therefore, we are recommending the development of a community wealth building hub. We also consider that adopting a broader lens to the support ecosystem would be a more ambitious approach.

We believe that a community wealth building hub could unite the various elements of what is currently a fragmented social economy business support landscape across the region. More specifically, a community wealth building hub would look to develop an eco-system of investment, technical and social support, which will be critical to enabling plural ownership models to flourish. Specialist support services provided by a community wealth building hub could include:

- Provision of wrap-around advice and support to generative organisations
- Funding/investment streams, which would support the development of new generative organisations to supply target sectors
- Business support, which could facilitate the conversion of some existing businesses to more generative models, including employee-ownership
- Bespoke business support programmes for the co-operative sector
- Support for developing 'platform co-operatives' – umbrella organisations in target sectors to provide the scale needed for small generative organisations to compete in public sector and commercial markets
- Addressing business ownership gaps in disadvantaged communities
- Developing community share offers
- Technical and financial support to enable community ownership models to thrive
- Technical support for social enterprise development; from early stage to growth
- Support for the development of social enterprise consortia
- Mentoring and peer support
- Linking public and private sector anchor organisations from across the region

¹⁵ EO Sector Snapshot, EOA and WRCEO, UK EO Business Register, 2025. Available: <https://employeeownership.co.uk/Site/Site/content/News-and-Insights/Research/Research.aspx>

A community wealth building hub could form a specialist support service area of YNYCA's Growth Hub.

Recent research by CLES estimates that the social economy sector in York and North Yorkshire has an estimated annual turnover of £2.8bn.¹⁶ Although YNYCA Local Growth Plan mentions the broader contribution of the VCSE sector, acknowledgement of the economic contribution and ambitions to develop the sector are absent. We have seen other combined authorities be very explicit in their ambitions for the social economy within their Economic Frameworks and Local Growth Plans, e.g. the West Midlands Combined Authority where they have an ambition to grow the size of the social economy across the region, which is supported by specialist business support and investment funding. We therefore recommend that the social economy should be formally recognised within the Economic Framework, the Local Growth Plan, and the associated delivery plans. This recognition will also be key to unlocking sector funding through the Local Growth Fund (LGF), which will be the succession funding of the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

As a commission, we have evaluated various industrial sectors - some highlighted within YNYCA Local Growth Plan - within which co-operative or social enterprise development could be promoted these included:

- Growing local food
- Renewable energy
- Social care
- Creative industries
- Community-owned heritage and tourism assets

As a commission, we are also aware of what seems like a very unlevel playing field in terms of mandatory business rate relief. Charities automatically receive up to 80% mandatory business rates relief, whereas social enterprises must apply discretionarily for business rate relief and often receive nothing - despite having identical social missions. We are asking for a consistent regional rate relief policy that will include mandatory business rate relief of 80% for our social enterprises and wider voluntary and community sector. We consider that this sends a clear signal that YNYCA views social enterprises, voluntary, and community sector organisations as distinct economic actors.

With a growing social enterprise sector the commission considers that there is an opportunity for YNYCA to support York and North Yorkshire in working towards social enterprise place/region accreditation, including engagement with relevant frameworks and sector bodies such as Social Enterprise UK (SEUK), and to explore targeted rate-relief mechanisms for non-extractive business models where legally and institutionally feasible.

¹⁶ Mapping the social economy in York and North Yorkshire (Unpublished), CLES, March 2026

Recommendation 5

YNYCA should address the role of the social economy in underpinning the wider economy of York and North Yorkshire being undervalued. We should build on the recognition within YNYCA's Economic Framework, the Local Growth Plan, and the associated delivery plans, of the role and economic contribution that the social economy is making. Increasing this recognition will be key to unlocking sector opportunities and contributing to the Local Growth Plan ambitions.

Recommendation 6

YNYCA should establish a community wealth building hub, which would deliver specialist services to support and grow co-operatives, social and community enterprises, and employee-owned businesses. This coordinated support would strengthen the ecosystem for alternative business models and increase the visibility and impact of socially productive organisations across the region. A community wealth building hub could form a specialist support service within YNYCA's growth hub's broader business support 'offer'.

Recommendation 7

YNYCA should develop a consistent regional rate relief policy that would include mandatory business rate relief for social enterprises, voluntary, and community sector organisations.



The action plan which supports the implementation of these recommendations can be found in appendix 2.

12. Using devolution to widen access and improve service delivery through publicly owned transport

Devolved transport powers are crucial for mayoral regions as they give local leaders the tools to design, integrate, and invest in transport systems that genuinely meet the needs of their communities. With control over functions such as bus regulation, local transport plans and devolved budgets, mayors can improve connectivity, reduce regional inequalities, and drive inclusive economic growth – something that we have seen repeatedly demonstrated in places such as Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire and Liverpool City Region. These powers also allow regions to coordinate infrastructure, planning and investment more effectively, speeding up delivery and ensuring transport networks support wider goals such as cleaner air, lower emissions, and better access to jobs and public services.

As a commission, transport within York and North Yorkshire has been a cross-cutting theme through many of our discussions. We have highlighted how vital access to transport is, especially for those in lower income groups and those who live in rural areas, to access healthcare services (GPs, hospitals, mental health support), education, and employment opportunities, healthier food options, social networks, support systems, and active travel. All these things improve mental and physical health and contribute to the narrowing of health inequalities.¹⁷ The lack of accessibility, reliability, and affordability of bus services is particularly significant here in York and North Yorkshire.

We recognise that the provision of bus services, outside of London, has been largely privatised and deregulated since the Transport Act 1985. This means services are run on a for-profit basis by private bus operators who set the routes, fares, and timetables, with little oversight from either national or local government.

¹⁷N Mihaylova (2021). How transport offers a route to better health. The Health Foundation. Available: <https://www.health.org.uk/reports-and-analysis/briefings/how-transport-offers-a-route-to-better-health>.

From a passenger perspective, this deregulation and the patchwork of different private operators has resulted in poor quality scheduled bus networks in many areas. Problems include uncoordinated timetables and routes, fragmented, single-operator ticketing, and a lack of accountability.

Forensic analysis of the main bus companies operating in the UK highlights that share ownership of these companies is dominated by a combination of high-net worth individuals, large banks, and major asset management companies.¹⁸ As such, we are seeing a significant transfer of income from ordinary bus service users, the funding pots of combined authorities, and council taxpayers who contribute to mayoral precepts, to investors. Indeed, the five main private bus companies paid out an average of almost £150m a year to shareholders between 2008 and 2018. With publicly owned bus networks, this resource would no longer be extracted as shareholder dividends¹⁹, and it is estimated that public ownership of buses would save £506m a year across the UK, which could be reinvested into services and cheaper fares.²⁰

Our discussions have highlighted the importance of community transport within York and North Yorkshire. We know that there is a mixed, but essentially good, existing network of community transport operators across the region, which vary in organisational size and the services that they offer. However, community transport in York and North Yorkshire is funded through a mix of local council support, national government allocations, project funding, and volunteer contributions. The commission recognises that the funding models for many community transport providers are often fragile, and we have questioned the balance of investment into sustainable rural transport solutions in comparison to those in urban settings.

We acknowledge that YNYCA has recently commissioned a desk-based review into five rural bus pilots, and we think that although the findings are some way off, they should provide insight into future solutions to the transport issues that our rural communities are facing. We are also aware that there will be a reduction in the bus revenue funding over the next three years.

Current transport systems mean that, often, residents must find a job near where they live. Shift patterns, and the fact that many shifts start at 6am when there are no rural buses, is also an issue.

Community transport operators, working under a S19 permit, are also outside of the concessionary fares scheme. The fact that concessionary fares do not apply on community transport services means that older people, as the major users of community transport, in our rural communities are often paying for transport services, which feels unfair.

18. S B Hager, M Brett and J Baines (2021). All aboard: Transforming bus services. Common Wealth. Available: <https://www.common-wealth.org/publications/all-aboard-transforming-bus-services>.

19. Affordable infrastructure: how strategic authorities can use housing and public transport to tackle health inequalities, CLES and the Kings Fund, 2025. Available: <https://cles.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Affordable-infrastructure-how-strategic-authorities-can-use-housing-and-public-transport-to-tackle-health-inequalities->

20. Ibid

We have also considered the Wheels to Work Scheme, which operates in North Yorkshire. Wheels to Work is a moped loan scheme for individuals requiring access to employment, education, and training. The scheme is used by a variety of age groups. The funding for the scheme is very fragile and finding investment for the scheme has proved difficult. We consider that there is an opportunity for this scheme to be funded through employment and skills budgets, such as Trailblazer 2.

There is also an opportunity for YNYCA to invest in community transport pilots - for example to explore the feasibility of:

- Community transport services working in partnership with franchise operators to augment the current service provision
- A community transport minibus acting as a feeder service for scheduled services
- School transport services being used more innovatively
- Community anchors working with NHS partners to consider hospital appointment grouping, so that a community minibus could be used to take several residents, from a similar geographical area to the hospital - another benefit of this could be that whilst patients are waiting at the hospital, they could be offered prevention services, such as diabetes checks and opportunities to connect socially

An integrated public transport and community transport system would also play a significant role in improving sustainability and reducing emissions across York and North Yorkshire, by offering realistic alternatives to private car use in both urban and rural areas, and contributing to the region's net zero ambitions - improving air quality, and reinforcing sustainable economic growth by making low-carbon travel the convenient and inclusive choice.

As a commission, we think there is an opportunity for YNYCA, through the LTP, to consider how the longer-term vision of a publicly owned bus operator can be delivered. We also think that YNYCA could evaluate how a publicly owned bus operator could be delivered through a unique York and North Yorkshire model, such as co-operative ownership.

We also made the case for considering a municipal ownership model, rather than a franchising system, as a viable long-term solution.

Recommendation 8

YNYCA should use their devolved powers to adopt a fully integrated approach to transport planning and integration across York and North Yorkshire. This holistic approach must include sustainable investment mechanisms and funding, co-ordination of scheduled services and community transport, a review of mass transit options, and the longer-term potential of municipal ownership to address gaps in transport infrastructure across the region.



As a commission, we have developed an action plan, which includes short-, medium- and long-term recommendations that would embed our recommendation.

13. Leveraging investment into critical infrastructure through targeted use of local government pension schemes and the development of a regional bank.

As a commission, we have reviewed two areas of finance and investment. Firstly, we have explored the opportunity of local investment through the North Yorkshire pension fund and secondly, we have looked at the feasibility of developing a regional bank, which would support local lending, investment, and community enterprise. In forming our recommendations, we think that it makes sense to look at these two areas in tandem due to the clear links between the aims of the approaches.

13.1 Local government pension funds

Pension funds secure the retirement futures of workers, but are also a major source of investment, especially to address the escalating climate emergency. The Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales (LGPS) is one of the largest pension schemes in the world, with over 6.7m members and £400bn of assets, set to grow to £1tn by 2040. The local nature of LGPS means that it has a unique role to play in supporting the economic development of local communities. The LGPS currently invests only 30% of its assets in the UK.

In November 2024, the government consulted on proposals to reform the LGPS in the areas of asset pooling, boosting local investment, and governance. On boosting local investment, the key proposals implemented in May 2025 were that administering authorities should set out their approach to local investment with respect to local growth plans/priorities and work with strategic authorities (CAs, MCAs etc.) to identify suitable local investment opportunities.



In May 2025, the government also announced that “the full investment might of the £392bn Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) will be unleashed by consolidating assets currently split over 86 administering authorities into just 6 pools” by March 2026.²¹ Also, “local investment targets will be agreed with LGPS authorities for the first time, securing £27.5bn for local priorities. LGPS authorities will work with regional mayors... and councils to back the projects that matter most to the public servants – most of whom are low-paid women - whose savings they manage”.²² The £27.5bn represents 5% of £550bn total assets by 2030.²³

Legislation to implement the reforms is currently progressing through parliament, and in November 2025, the government launched a consultation on regulations.²⁴ In particular, Regulation 17 would require funds to “co-operate with the relevant strategic authority to identify and develop appropriate local investment opportunities”.²⁵

North Yorkshire council is the statutory administering authority for the North Yorkshire Pension Fund (NYPF). The fund's management, administration, and investment arrangements are delegated to the Pension Fund Committee (PFC), which is a committee of the council. Our research has shown that at the end of September 2025, the NYPF's assets stood at around £5bn²⁶, with investment in UK assets (equities, cash, property, bonds) at around 37% of total investment as of 31 March 2025.²⁷

Their Investment Strategy Statement, published in June 2025, sets out the primary objective of the fund around providing pension benefits for members, but it makes no mention of any secondary objectives around local investment.²⁸ Similarly, the Responsible Investment Policy makes no mention of priorities to boost local investment.²⁹ The Climate Change Policy is generic and non-committal,³⁰ with the only climate specific investment in the investment report being ‘BCPP Climate Opportunities’ under the infrastructure asset class, with NYPF's investment being £90m, or 1.8% of the total fund.

We have calculated that if 5% of NYPF assets were invested locally, this could unlock new local investment of up to £250m in the York and North Yorkshire region. However, as a commission, we do not think that a target of 5% is ambitious enough. We think that the target for local investment should be at least 10%. There is also an opportunity to link this additional investment to the priority areas of YNYCA Local Growth Plan.

As a commission, we also recognise that the regional TUC needs to be involved in the discussions, with the pension authority, as they progress.

21.HM Treasury, Press release, May 2025. Available: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pension-plan-to-double-25-billion-megafunds-boost-investment-and-improve-returns-for-savers>

22.Ibid

23.Sunak's Conservative government set an ambition in the Levelling Up White Paper (LUWP) for LGPS funds to invest up to 5% of their assets in projects

24.Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, LGPS in England and Wales, Fit for the Future, Technical Consultation, November 2025.

25.Ibid

26.NYPF Quarterly Investment Report, September 2025.

27.NYPF Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25, p.23

28.NYPF Investment Strategy Statement, June 2025

29.NYPF Responsible Investment Policy

30.NYPF Climate Change Policy

13.2 Development of a regional bank

Within this context, a regional bank is a bank that is mission-led, often member-owned (mutual) or ethically focused, concentrating on local/regional geographic areas to support SMEs and individuals often underserved by mainstream lenders. These banks are also often referred to as community banks.

Over the past decade, according to Which?³¹, 66% of bank branches across the UK have closed their doors. We know that both York and North Yorkshire have been affected by bank branch closures, and the region now has one of the lowest levels of access to banks in the UK - 4.4 branches per 100,000 people, compared to the national average of around six.³² There are currently approximately 248 remaining branches, serving a population of roughly 5.6m – this is down from 728 branches in 2015, meaning that there have been around 480 closures since then (mirroring the national figure of a 66% reduction)³³.

The loss of our bank branches extends beyond the practical - a local bank branch brings footfall to the high street, and the erosion of this presence leaves towns quieter, economies more fragile, and communities more disconnected.

As a commission, we view that, in the longer term, there is a key role for a regional mutual bank to play in:

- Lending to local businesses
- Creating new jobs through lending to businesses
- Opening branches
- Boosting the regional economy
- Supporting people who are struggling
- Combatting pay day lenders
- Being owned by the members

It is worth noting that the development of a regional bank was also one of the recommendations within the report of the North Yorkshire Rural Commission in July 2021.

31. Which Report, Over 6,000 bank branches closed since 2015 and counting. Available: <https://www.which.co.uk/news/article/6000-bank-branches-closed-and-counting-aamza6L6HcnG>

32. Which Report, Yorkshire has the worst bank branch access in the country. Available: <https://www.which.co.uk/news/article/yorkshire-has-the-worst-bank-branch-access-in-the-country-anDj78P4KrHY>

33. Ibid

We also want to be realistic. The development of regional banks, in the UK, face significant challenges related to high operational costs, heavy regulatory burdens, and intense competition from established high street and digital challenger banks. These factors can limit their ability to achieve scale and sustained profitability. However, we think this is an ambition that needs to be kept on the mayor's and YNYCA's future agenda.

More immediately, our findings have highlighted the important role that various financial institutions, such as credit unions and building societies, play across the region, as high street banks continue to close. We consider that YNYCA needs to continue to explore the implementation of scalable models of delivering 'cash' services on high streets across the region, such as a One Banx cash machine that has been incorporated into the Newcastle Building Society's new branch in Pickering. We also acknowledged that there are opportunities for YNYCA to reconnect with credit unions working in the region.

Throughout this report, we have highlighted the social economy, in terms of its vibrancy and potential capability, but also in terms of the dedicated business support and the investment it needs to grow. We believe that there is a significant opportunity for YNYCA to develop a social investment fund, similar to the Kindred model, which operates within the Liverpool City Region or the Flexible Social Finance fund, which operates within the North East Combined Authority Region.

Finally, in this section we recognise that YNYCA oversees a variety of different investment funds, including the new LGF. We also appreciate that these investment funds are likely to grow and develop in the future. Therefore, as a commission, we evaluate that YNYCA should adopt a community wealth building lens to strategic investment in the region.

Recommendation 9

The mayor and YNYCA should convene a programme of discussions with the leaders of the North Yorkshire Local Government Pension Authority and negotiate an agreement with the authority to develop a regional investment portfolio of at least 10%, to support investments in areas such as local housing, housing retrofit, and renewable energy.

Recommendation 10

YNYCA should adopt a community wealth building lens to strategic investment in the region. This generative inward investment approach would invite investors to clarify how they contribute to the long-term ambition of a healthy, resilient, and thriving York and North Yorkshire. It would include a prospectus of key social value asks to ensure that there is alignment of environment, social and governance (ESG) goals and social/economic challenges as outlined in the Local Growth Plan.

Recommendation 11

YNYCA should establish a social economy investment fund, similar to those provided within the Liverpool city region and the north-east, to further strengthen and grow the social economy across the region. An investment fund will allow social economy organisations greater access to start-up and growth funding.

Recommendation 12

YNYCA should establish a regional task force that would oversee a feasibility study of a regional mutual bank for York and North Yorkshire. A regional mutual bank would support local lending and investment to our SMEs and micro-businesses, as well as our VCSE sector.



The above recommendations are supported by an action plan, which can be found in appendix 2.

14. Setting the standard for decent work and pay for all through the York and North Yorkshire Good Work Charter

Good business and employment charters have emerged as an important means of securing commitment to good work standards. They are 'soft power' tools, which help to fill gaps in national-level statutory employment standards, drawing on good work guidelines to establish a location-specific standard.³⁴

Charters are voluntary initiatives that set employment standards for employers, seek to influence business practice to promote good work, and recognise organisations that adopt them. They may also cover areas not directly related to their own workforce, such as engagement with local supply chains, community volunteering, or environmental protection.

One of the key priorities of the commission is to support and drive further development of a business charter, which has the potential to support businesses from across the region to grow, by building and demonstrating their commitment to the communities within which they are located.

Within York we already have an existing business charter and the city became a Good Business Charter (GBC) City in June 2021 – with the City of York Council, University of York, Aviva, and Joseph Rowntree Foundation becoming GBC accredited and key anchors in launching it. Since then, the York St John University has also been accredited, as have a range of small, medium and large organisations throughout the city. There are currently 80 GBC accredited organisations in York and North Yorkshire.

34. TUC: Linking employment charters to procurement - Opportunities and challenges. Available: <https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/linking-employment-charters-procurement>

YNYCA has recently commissioned research, through the Economic Inactivity Trailblazer programme, to explore how a charter-based approach can contribute to supporting 'good work' across York and North Yorkshire. We consider that the findings of this research will form a useful basis for YNYCA to continue to explore and implement good work, and the potential role of a good work charter in driving improvements in employment conditions and rewards.

As commissioners, we have questioned what elements of a business charter would resonate with our SME sectors. In developing their future approach to a business charter YNYCA should be mindful that one single charter may not work across different geographies and different business sectors. We were particularly concerned about how a business charter approach would work for our rural businesses.

We have also considered the Real Living Wage, and we have concluded that YNYCA should commit to becoming a Living Wage Employer and to lead a campaign for York and North Yorkshire to become a Living Wage Place – using the established Living Wage Foundation accreditation pathway.

In forming our recommendations, we believe that YNYCA has a role to play in working with anchor partners and business to promote good work across the region.

Recommendation 13

YNYCA should work with trade unions, public, private, and third sector organisations to raise the standard of employment, pay, and reward across the region. YNYCA should target the key employment sectors outlined in the Local Growth Plan - health and social care, retail and the visitor economy - as these are traditionally lower income sectors.

Recommendation 14

YNYCA should commit to attaining Real Living Wage accreditation within the next 18 months. YNYCA should use this status to support other public sector organisations to take steps to attain Real Living Wage accreditation.



To support the implementation of the above recommendations we have developed an action plan (appendix 2).

15. Making the connections: A systemic approach to increasing the flow, circulation, and ownership of wealth across York and North Yorkshire

Although we have explored many of our predetermined subject areas separately, we recognise that there is clearly connectivity and, to some degree, interdependency between the various areas that have been explored. For example, if public sector and anchor institution procurement focus on the development of local supply chains, particularly supply chains that include social economy organisations, then the social economy sector, from across the region, will need specialist business support services and investment funding to be able to fulfil this ambition.

Therefore, considering and implementing our recommendations YNYCA needs to be mindful of how implementing one recommendation affects the others.



15.1 Future of the CWB Commission

Earlier in this report, we advocated that YNYCA should consider developing a permanent Community Wealth Building Advisory and Accountability Panel, to oversee the implementation of a community wealth building approach across YNYCA and anchor partners. We appreciate that this revised governance structure will take time to plan and implement, and as an interim step we recommend that the tenure of this commission is extended, as permitted within the terms of reference, until a formal governance structure is put in place.

We consider that there is an ongoing role for the commission in:

- Monitoring the progress and implementation of the recommendations made within this report
- Further exploring how community wealth building principles can be applied in key strategic areas such as housing and energy
- Advocating and influencing for community wealth building across the region

It is worth noting that throughout this initial phase the commission has met monthly and moving forward, in an oversight role, it would be more feasible for the commission to meet on a quarterly basis.

	Recommendation 15	
	The mayor of York and North Yorkshire should extend the tenure of the Mayoral Community Wealth Building Commission until a permanent governance structure, such as a Community Wealth Building Advisory and Accountability Panel, is put in place.	

15.2 A call to action

Community wealth building is not something that is done to communities, it is done with them. There is already extraordinary work happening across York and North Yorkshire, and our ambition is to build on it.

Through our discussions, we have envisaged a thriving, resilient, and healthy York and North Yorkshire, where everyone, from our anchor institutions, our businesses large and small, and of course our communities themselves, has a role to play. We know there is lots of activity happening already, and we see community wealth building as a framework to bring all of these activities together, in a combined approach that will result in long-term impact and change.

Getting community wealth building rooted into communities, processes, and planning will take time and effort. Our recommendations prepare the foundations for change, but the mayor and YNYCA have a key role to play in making community wealth building a familiar term and a tangible concept for the citizens of this region. That means going out to communities, listening, and demonstrating that this approach works for them, not just for the institutions that serve them.

Everyone has a part to play. We are asking YNYCA to lead. We are asking anchor institutions, businesses, and the voluntary, social enterprise, and community sector to commit. Importantly, we are asking the communities of York and North Yorkshire to hold all of us to account.

6. Next Steps

As a commission, we believe that our recommendations, supporting action plans, and basic monitoring and evaluation framework provide the mayor and YNYCA with a clear pathway to implement community wealth building across their holistic remit.

Extending the tenure of the commission will ensure that our recommendations, particularly our short-term recommendations, are implemented and that we have a role in holding YNYCA to account.



Appendix 1: Terms of reference of the commission

Terms of reference

Mayoral Commission on Community Wealth Building York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority

1. Background

The Mayor of York and North Yorkshire and York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA) are committed to creating healthy and thriving communities that deliver inclusive economic growth for a more sustainable regional economy with increased opportunities for all.

Community wealth building is a people-centred approach to local economic development that redirects wealth, power, and decision-making back into the hands of communities.

The commission will advise the Mayor of York and North Yorkshire on practical interventions and policy measures that embed community wealth building principles, strengthen economic resilience, and ensure the benefits of growth are widely shared.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the commission is to develop a strategic plan and set of recommendations that enable York and North Yorkshire to:

- Promote fair work, secure employment, and equitable pay.
- Ensure public sector spending and procurement benefits local communities and businesses. Strengthen democratic ownership of assets and enterprises.
- Build financial systems and infrastructure that support inclusive economic growth.
- Harness and enhance existing networks and partnerships across the region.

3. Objectives

The commission will focus on the following interventions:

Employment and fair work:

- Explore the best option for securing the commitment of employers to fair work practices in York and North Yorkshire, setting out minimum standards on pay, security, and conditions.
- Assess and recommend steps for YNYCA to become an exemplar of best practice employment policies, exploring schemes such as Living Wage Employer accreditation.

Anchor institutions and procurement:

- Recommendations for the guiding principles of a public sector anchor organisation network, to include local authorities, NHS trusts, universities, colleges, housing associations, etc., to collaborate on shared community wealth building commitments.
- Assess YNYCA procurement policies and provide recommendations that prioritise contracts that keep wealth circulating locally and support local suppliers, SMEs, social enterprises, and co-operatives.

Democratic ownership of assets and enterprises

Establish a plan that explores the feasibility and deliverability of democratic ownership of assets and enterprises, such as but not limited to the following interventions:

- A regional plan for community-owned assets, supporting the transfer and management of assets such as pubs, community centres, infrastructure, and services into community hands.
- A co-operative and worker ownership hub to provide advice, training, and support for co-operative development and employee ownership transitions.
- A publicly owned bus operator, ensuring affordable and reliable services.
- A regional bank, or financial institution, to support local lending, investment, and community enterprise.

Networks and ecosystem building

- Map and support existing networks within York and North Yorkshire (business support, voluntary, and community sector organisations, social enterprises, and trade unions) to maximise impact and avoid duplication.

4. Membership

The commission will be convened by the Mayor of York and North Yorkshire, who will designate one member to act as chair. The commission will include representatives from:

- York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority Business Board
- Regional academic institutions
- Charitable organisations with specialist knowledge in community wealth building and related fields
- Trade unions

The commission will be supported by officers from City of York Council, North Yorkshire Council, and York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority. The commission will be further supported by produced research services to assist in developing the plan.

5. Governance and accountability

- The commission will report directly to the mayor and Combined Authority Board.
- An officer working group will be established, with membership from YNYCA, CYC, and NYC, to support driving forward the work of the commission.
- Interim findings will be shared with stakeholders and the public to ensure transparency and accountability.
- A final report with recommendations will be presented before the end of March 2026.

6. Outputs

The commission will deliver:

1. A Community Wealth Building Strategy for York and North Yorkshire.
2. A set of policy recommendations for adoption by York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority and partner institutions.
3. A clear implementation plan with short, medium, and long-term actions.
4. A framework for monitoring and evaluating progress against agreed, bespoke community wealth building objectives.

7. Duration

The commission will operate until it has produced a final report and may extend or transition into a permanent advisory body subject to mayoral approval.

Appendix 2: Action plans

The action plans that we have developed are divided into short term actions, which we consider should be completed within the next 12 months, medium term actions, which we think are achievable within 12 to 24 months and longer-term actions, post 24 months. We anticipate that this report will be presented to YNYCA in June 2026, and we consider that this will represent the start date of the implementation timetables outlined below.

2.1 Short-term actions

Community wealth building: the underpinning framework for the region's economic strategy

Action	Timeline	Next steps	Monitoring and evaluation
YNYCA should develop a community wealth building Statement of Commitment.	Short-term	The development of a formal Statement of Commitment will demonstrate YNYCA's commitment to embedding community wealth building as the primary framework to delivering inclusive growth across the region.	Development of a community wealth building Statement of Commitment, within the next 3 months.
YNYCA should embed community wealth building into new and existing combined authority plans and strategies.	Short-term	Building on the above commitment YNYCA should ensure that community wealth building is explicitly written into written into CA's statutory plans, formal strategies, and delivery frameworks. These should include: • YNYCA's Corporate Plan • The Economic Framework • The Local Growth Plan and associated delivery plans • The Local Transport Plan • The business support strategy.	Within the next 12 months, community wealth building and the supporting activities are detailed within key plans, strategies and frameworks of YNYCA.
YNYCA should commit to establishing permanent and dedicated capacity and associated resource to lead and embed community wealth building.	Short-term	To lead and embed community wealth building within the combined authority will require capacity and resource. The commission considers that without dedicated capacity and resource the recommendations and actions detailed within this report risk becoming an unfunded list of aspirations. YNYCA should appoint a senior officer with explicit CA-wide responsibility for community wealth building. The officer should be responsible for: • Cross-directorate coordination of community wealth building activities • Supporting the York and North Yorkshire anchor network • Community wealth building programme design • Have responsibility for designing relevant metrics, collating data and reporting progress.	Appointment of a senior officer to lead and coordinate community wealth building across the CA, within the next 12 months.

YNYCA should form a Community Wealth Building Steering Group to ensure that robust cross-directorate governance is implemented.	Short-term	Progressing community wealth building is not just the responsibility of a community wealth building officer or a community wealth building policy team. The commission considers that YNYCA should form a community wealth building steering group, comprised of senior officers. The remit of the steering group would encompass economic growth, transport, skills, housing, procurement, finance, and other relevant portfolios. The steering group should report on a quarterly basis to senior leadership and to the relevant committee structures/boards, within the CA.	Formation of a community wealth building steering group by YNYCA within the next Meeting notes and minutes to evidence that the Steering group has met and the subjects being discussed.
A Community Wealth Building Impact Statement in formal decision-making	Short-term	YNYCA should develop and include a standardised Community Wealth Building Impact Statement in all major strategy papers, business cases, funding programme proposals, procurement proposals, and committee papers. This statement would embed community wealth building within the decision-making process and embedding it in procedures rather than relying on political will.	Evidence of a Community Wealth Building Impact Statement in all major strategy papers, business cases, funding programme proposals, procurement proposals, and committee papers, within the next 12 months.
YNYCA should develop an internal community wealth building awareness raising programme.	Short-term	The combined authority should develop an internal staff awareness raising programme that will enable staff to be aware of the principles of community wealth building, the ambition of the CA in relation to community wealth building and the practical application of the principles with areas such as procurement and business case development. For new staff, awareness raising about community wealth building aspirations and implementation should be covered within staff induction processes. The cultural embedding of community wealth building takes time, but it leads to longer-term outcomes and rewards.	Within the next 12 months YNYCA should develop a community wealth building awareness raising programme. Monitor the number of staff that have completed the awareness training. Evidence that community wealth building is included within induction packs/training materials.
YNYCA need to develop a plan to communicate their community wealth building ambitions with local authority partners.	Short-term	To be durable and have impact community wealth building needs to be embedded with key anchor partners, particularly with the two constituent local authorities. The CA need to develop a communications plan that will explain their community wealth building commitments to City of York Council and North Yorkshire Council.	Development of a communications plan for constituent Councils within the next 6 months.

Re-imagining procurement and commissioning

Actions	Timeline	Next steps	Monitoring and evaluation
YNYCA should adopt and implement their updated procurement policy, informed by the commission's findings.	Short-term	The completed policy should be approved by the CA's Leadership Team (CALT). YNYCA should ensure that there is staff capacity to finalise the CA's procurement policy as soon as practicable.	The strategy should be complete and implemented within the next 3-6 months.
YNYCA should review their approach to social value.	Short-term	Following the completion of the procurement policy the CA should: - Review and improve the scoring of social value within tenders and develop a YNYCA social value framework - YNYCA should incorporate 'inherent social value' into their scoring of social value. This would support VCSE organisations to access supply chain opportunities - Social value weighting criteria should explicitly include trade union access and above-statutory sick and maternity pay - Create a system for monitoring and reporting the impact of social value through both quantitative metrics and qualitative data. The Commission recommends that YNYCA should develop their own bespoke approach to monitoring social value, rather than buying 'off the shelf' software.	This should be completed within the next 6 months. The monitoring and evaluation system should be in place within the next 6 to 12 months
YNYCA should undertake a baseline spend analysis of their procurement spend data.	Short-term	The CA should undertake a spend analysis to identify where monies are being spent, and sectors of 'leakage'. The analysis should highlight: - Geographical areas of spend - Split of public/private and VCSE sector spending, per sector spend category. Commissioners consider that the spend analysis should include all transactions over £500, rather than solely focussing on the top 250 suppliers, which is currently being suggested by YNYCA. This baseline spend analysis will also allow the CA to track changes in spending patterns as the organisation evolves.	A spend analysis should be completed within the next 6 months

YNYCA should identify areas of influenceable spend and future contract opportunities.	Short-term	Following the baseline spend analysis the CA will be able to identify areas of influenceable spend. The CA should consider how it can use procurement levers such as direct awards, contract lotting, simplification of tender processes, or reserved contracts to encourage VCSE organisations, particularly trading social enterprises, social enterprise consortia, and SMEs to tender for opportunities.	This work relating to influenceable spend and the proactive use of procurement levers should be undertaken within the next 6-9 months. The CA should monitor when the following levers have been used: • Direct awards • Contract lotting • Simplified tender processes • Reserved contracts The CA should record the number of contracts awarded to: • VCSE organisations • SMEs
YNYCA should implement a support strategy to improve supplier procurement skills.	Short-term	Current procurement support initiatives are relatively fragmented and access to support varies across the region. The commission recommends that before producing their procurement skills support strategy the CA maps the 'existing offer' to identify gaps in support provisions and examples of good practice.	The mapping of the existing procurement skills support should be undertaken within the next 6-12 months.

Leading and championing community ownership

Actions	Timeline	Next steps	Monitoring and evaluation
YNYCA should establish a York and North Yorkshire Land Commission with a multi-strand remit covering Community Ownership, Housing, and Renewable Energy.	Short-term	YNYCA should establish a York and North Yorkshire Land Commission. We recommend that the terms of reference of the commission should include the following: • Mapping publicly owned and underused land across the region • Identifying sites suitable for community land trusts, community-led housing, and local authority housing development, and supporting a pipeline of projects from identification through to delivery • Assessing the potential of publicly owned land for renewable energy generation • Supporting a pipeline of community asset transfers, and identifying the capacity, technical support, and funding needed to enable communities to take ownership • Setting realistic periods for 'sale windows' of community assets. • To assess the use of mayoral acquisition powers to transition vacant commercial properties to community or local authority ownership.	A land commission should be established within the next 12 months.
In the short term, YNYCA should consider how funding can be provided to support community ownership projects.	Short-term	The end of UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Community Ownership Fund means that there will be a significant funding gap to support community ownership projects. YNYCA needs to consider how it can provide funding that will: • Allow feasibility studies to be undertaken • Provide funds for purchasing properties • Provide funds for property repairs. Both capital and revenue funding streams will need to be provided.	Provision and use of capital and revenue funding for community ownership projects. These funding streams should be in place within the next 3-6 months.

To underpin their strategic approach to community ownership of assets YNYCA, together with City of York Council and North Yorkshire Council should provide specialist business services to support community ownership projects.	Short-term	As outlined above the ending of UKSPF and COF will mean that services/projects that have supported community ownership projects will end. YNYCA should work with both constituent councils and third sector infrastructure organisation to map the remaining specialist business support services that are available to communities that want to explore community ownership opportunities. Based on the above findings YNYCA, together with the local authorities should implement a specialist support offer that community groups developing community ownership projects will be able to access. This should include: • Promoting community ownership opportunities • Support with developing business cases • Governance support • Accessing finance and investment • Developing networks that will strengthening peer support across the region and between successful community land and asset owners. The 'offer' could form part of the services provided by a community wealth building hub.	Development of specialist business support services for community ownership, by all three authorities, within the next 12 months.
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Convening for economic and social change through anchor collaboration

Actions	Timeline	Next steps	Monitoring and evaluation
YNYCA and the Mayor's team should agree the principal anchors that will be involved in the initial engagement activities.	Short-term	YNYCA should agree the group of principal anchors that it wants to engage. As a commission we suggest that these should include organisations such as the two local authorities, University of York, York St John University, a representative from the HE sector and a representative from the Integrated Care Board (ICB). YNYCA should finalise their draft engagement paper, which outlines the purpose and intent of the Anchor network.	Finalised list of principal anchors agreed, within the next month. Finalised anchor engagement paper produced, within the next month.
YNYCA should meet with leaders from the 'principal' anchor institutions to outline their intent to develop an anchor network in York and North Yorkshire.	Short-term	The mayor's team and YNYCA should arrange and facilitate an initial meeting with a senior leader from each of the 'principal' anchor institutions. The meeting will be used to: • Outline the intent of the anchor network • Agree a 1-year statement of intent to be part of an anchor network from each organisation. • Agree the first-year priorities for the network • Identify areas of joint interest and agree three joint pilots, e.g. in procurement, good work and community assets. • Explore areas of existing good practice within the organisation • Identify any existing officer working groups in areas such as procurement and employment. The initial meeting could be followed by a 1-2-1 online interview to find out more about what is happening at an individual institution level.	Evidence that an initial meeting has taken place within the next 2- 3 months. Signed statement of intent to be part of an anchor network for the first year. Documented year 1 priority areas. Pilot areas agreed.
Review the findings of the initial engagement activities and the outputs from the trailblazer 'Good Work and Anchor Organisations'.	Short-term	Reflect on the initial data gathered and utilise this insight to develop a realistic plan of the next phase of the project. This should include the development of an engagement plan which will detail: • Which organisations will be involved: public sector, business and community anchors • Likely timeframe • An updated engagement paper, which will be relevant for all three audiences.	Within the next 3 months YNYCA should building on the outputs above and an updated plan should be produced by YNYCA detailing the steps required to develop a wider anchor network.

The mayor's team and YNYCA should consider the governance structure of an anchor network.	Short-term	Consideration should be given to the potential governance structure of an anchor network, for example: Could there be a cross sectoral senior leadership group supporting a number of officers working groups, which would be responsible for the implementation of various work streams/interventions.	Evidence that governance structures have been considered. This research will form part of the discussions at the wider anchor meeting. This should be undertaken within the next 3-6 months.
YNYCA should arrange a kick off meeting/workshop for a larger group of anchor partners.	Short-term	Arrange a kick off meeting/workshop session for the wider anchor network. Ensure there is clear messaging about the purpose of an anchor network.	Evidence that a meeting with wider anchor partners has taken place. Review of meeting agenda and minutes. A wider meeting should be held within the next 6 months.
YNYCA should work with anchor partners to develop a baseline data set.	Short term	The mayor's team and YNYCA should work with anchor network members to develop a baseline data set, which could include: • A review of employment data • A spend data of key anchors to identify influenceable spend • Mapping of key land and assets • Carbon emissions This dataset could be used to 'establish the size of the prize' and identify areas of opportunity.	Documented evidence provided that the baseline data research has been undertaken within the next 12 months.

Strengthening democratic ownership

Actions	Timeline	Next steps	Monitoring and evaluation
YNYCA should formally acknowledge the contribution of the social economy within YNYCA Economic Framework, Local Growth Plan and the associated delivery plans.	Short-term	As well as acknowledging the social economy within the Economic Framework, Growth Plan and the associated delivery plans, YNYCA should include: • Clear aims to grow the size and capacity of the sector • Provide specialist business support services (see below) • Use the LGF to develop social economy sector funding and investment streams/programmes.	Recognition of the social economy within the growth plan, combined with: • Clear targets set to grow the social economy • Funding and investment identified within the LGF • This should be completed within the next 3-6 months.
YNYCA should develop a community wealth building hub which would provide specialist business support services to a variety of plural ownership models.	Short-term	In order to support plural ownership models across York and North Yorkshire, there is a need to deliver specialist and targeted business support services. A generic business support service is unlikely to be sufficient. Specialist services should be capable of supporting: • Social enterprise development; both new start and growth • Co-operative development • Employee ownership transitions • Community ownership • Community shares • Development of procurement skills • Anchor organisations wanting to find out more/work with social economy organisations.	Redesign and implementation of specialist business support services within the next 6-9 months.
YNYCA should develop a consistent regional business rate relief policy, which includes mandatory business rate relief for social enterprises.	Short-term	To support the growth of the social enterprise sector YNYCA should develop a policy that would include mandatory business rate relief for social enterprises, bringing the sector in line with the mandatory business rate relief status of charities. This business rate relief would be applicable to a variety of different social enterprise legal structures such as • Community Interest Companies (CICs) • Companies Limited by Guarantee (CLGs) • Community Benefits Societies (CBS) • Co-operatives.	Development of a regional business rate relief policy which includes social enterprise legal structures, within the next 6-9 months.

Widening access and improving service delivery through publicly owned transport

Actions	Timeline	Next steps	Monitoring and evaluation
YNYCA should review the funding of community transport services across the region, including exploring the use of concessionary fares on community transport services.	Short-term	Community transport is a vital service for many communities across our region and should be treated as a core community wealth building delivery mechanism – connecting rural residents to employment, education, and health services – not merely as a supplementary service. YNYCA should conduct a review of how community services are funded within York and North Yorkshire. This review should include exploring how concessions for community transport and dial-a-ride services could be implemented.	Documented evidence of a community transport review, which should be completed within the next 12 months.
YNYCA should explore how it can secure/allocate future funding to support the continuation of the Wheels to Work scheme.	Short-term	YNYCA should consider the various funding streams it has available to support the continuation of the Wheels to Work scheme. As a commission, we think that there are opportunities for the scheme to be funded through employment and skills funding, such as Trailblazer 2.	Evidence of a research paper into how the ongoing scheme could be funded. This report should be completed within the next 6 months.
YNYCA should consider community transport within the Local Transport Plan (LTP).	Short-term	Our research has shown the importance of community transport to our region. We consider that the strategic long-term planning of community transport should be included within the LTP.	Evidence of community transport being considered within the LTP, when it is published.

Leveraging local investment

Actions	Timeline	Next steps	Monitoring and evaluation
The Mayor and YNYCA should convene a programme of discussions with senior leaders/executives of the NYPF.	Short-term	The mayor and YNYCA should arrange to meet CEO and the chair of the NYPF and the chair of the Pensions Board as soon as practicable to outline and advocate for local investment to be part of the investment portfolio. Areas of investment to consider include: • Social housing • Local energy • Retrofit	Evidence that mayor and YNYCA have met leaders/executives from the NYPF, within the next 3 months
The mayor and YNYCA should advocate for a local investment target of 10% from the NYPF.	Short-term	The mayor and YNYCA should advocate for a local investment target of 10% from the NYPF. There should be a public commitment by the NYPF of achieving this target, supported by a clear timeline. 10% of the YNPF to be reinvested into local growth.	Public commitment, and timeline, by leaders of the NYPF to achieving the local investment target of 10%, within the next 3-9 months.
Demonstrating the impact of localised investment	Short-term	YNYCA should undertake a feasibility report that would demonstrate the significant difference that a level of 10% local investment would make to the region.	Feasibility study completed within the next 12 months.

YNYCA should develop processes and procedures to ensure that community wealth building opportunities are considered within strategic investment decisions.	Short-term	Procedures and processes should be developed to ensure that community wealth building is considered by YNYCA and key partners within strategic investment decision making. The above should include YNYCA and partner funding streams explicitly identifying how they can align to support local enterprise, the social economy, democratic ownership, and community assets. There is an opportunity to embed the above within the remit of the York and North Yorkshire Investor Forum.	Process and procedures developed within the next 6 months. Documented evidence of funding decision aligning with community wealth building principles. Documented evidence of community wealth building being included on the agendas of Investor Forum Meetings within the next 6 months.
YNYCA should review the findings of the High Streets Fund projects.	Short-term	There are a number of innovative pilot projects taking place. YNYCA should review the findings of the pilots and make recommendations for how successful projects can be sustained and scaled.	Evidence of review of High Streets Fund, within the next 3 months.
YNYCA should reconnect with the Credit Unions that are working across the Region.	Short-term	There have been changes to the Credit Unions that are operating within York and North Yorkshire. There is an opportunity for YNYCA to reconnect with credit unions to find out more about the services that they are providing and the opportunities to strengthen, support and promote these services.	Evidence of meetings with Credit Unions, within the next 6 months.
YNYCA should commit to developing a social investment fund.	Short-term	This is a timely opportunity for YNYCA to develop a social investment fund, which would support trading social economy organisations to scale and grow. The monies to deliver such a fund could come from a variety of funding streams, such as: • The Local Growth Fund • The proposed visitor levy • Social finance providers, for example Big Issue Invest • Philanthropic sources	Evidence of commitment to developing a social investment fund, within the next 6 months.

Championing decent work

Actions	Timeline	Next steps	Monitoring and evaluation
YNYCA should commit to becoming a Real Living Wage employer.	Short-term	YNYCA should explicitly commit to becoming a Living Wage Employer and adopt a Living Wage Place pathway for the Combined Authority area using the Living Wage Foundation's established accreditation framework.	YNYCA accredited by the Living Wage Foundation within the next 12 months.
YNYCA should promote better pay and conditions for workers across the region.	Short-term	Through its networks, particularly the anchor networks and through its funding and commissioning procedures YNYCA should promote better pay and conditions for workers across York and North Yorkshire. The Commission considers that there is an opportunity for community wealth building principles to be aligned with anchor institution employment practices, where possible. These community wealth building principles should include fair work standards, which should be incorporated into staff induction, procurement training, and business case appraisal processes.	Evidence of promoting better pay and conditions at the meetings of the anchor network, within the next 6-9 months.
Review the findings of the business charter research commissioned by YNYCA and consider how the recommendations can be implemented.	Short-term	YNYCA should review the findings of the business charter research and develop a plan to implement a business charter scheme that can be adapted for businesses across York and North Yorkshire.	Evidence of a review of the findings and development of an implementation plan, within the next 6 months.

2.2 Medium-term actions

Community wealth building as a holistic approach

Actions	Timeline	Next steps	Monitoring and evaluation
YNYCA need to develop a plan to communicate their community wealth building ambitions with local authority partners.	Medium-term	Building on our short-term recommendations: - The CA need to develop a communications plan that will explain their community wealth building commitments to City of York Council and North Yorkshire Council. - The CA should work with these two authorities to develop shared principles and objectives, action-planning commitments, data-sharing and reporting obligations, a review timetable, and governance arrangements. Note: It is anticipated that community wealth building will be embedded with wider anchor partners through the work of the York and North Yorkshire Regional Anchor Network.	Within the next 12-18 months, evidence of shared principles and objectives, action-planning commitments, data-sharing and reporting obligations. Community wealth building discussed within key documents of both local authorities.
YNYCA should develop a permanent community wealth building Advisory and Accountability Panel.	Medium-term	Within the terms of reference for the commission state, the commission could “transition into a permanent advisory body subject to mayoral approval.” Commissioners consider that a permanent Community Wealth Building Advisory and Accountability Panel should be developed. The commission advises that this panel should meet on a quarterly basis and that it should form part of the CA’s governance structure. The Commission recommend that the panel should have a defined three-year term, which can be renewed. The remit of the community wealth building Advisory and Accountability Panel would include: - Reviewing progress on an annual basis - Commenting on strategy alignment - Maintaining public visibility of the agenda The CA should develop plans for this transition process to take place.	Evidence of commitment to the development of a Community Wealth Building. Advisory and Accountability Panel, within the next 18 to 24 months. Development of a governance transition plan.

Re-imagining procurement and commissioning

Actions	Timeline	Next steps	Monitoring and evaluation
YNYCA should update/train internal staff in relation to the changes in their approach to procurement and the expectations on staff.	Medium-term	CLES recommends that YNYCA develops awareness raising for staff to ensure that team members that are commissioners or buying goods and services are aware of the aims of the updated procurement and social value policies. This awareness raising phase should ensure that staff are considering how procurement opportunities are designed and shaped as early as possible.	Awareness raising/retraining should be implemented within the next 12-18 months. The CA should monitor the number of staff that have taken part in the training.
YNYCA should implement market engagement and market shaping activities.	Medium-term	The CA are already aware of the need to engage with current and potential suppliers. The CA should: • Develop a market engagement plan that will focus particularly on SMEs and the VCSE sector • Develop strategies to localise or stimulate market to create a better chance for North Yorkshire spending The CA has an opportunity to proactively shape potential markets based on future procurement opportunities and local supply chain gaps.	The market engagement plan and the market localisation/stimulation plan should be developed within the next 12-18 months. The CA should monitor the number of market engagement activities and events it undertakes.
YNYCA should implement a support strategy to improve supplier procurement skills.	Medium term	Following the mapping of existing procurement skills, YNYCA should finalise their strategy which will focus on improving supplier bidding skills. Businesses and VCSE organisations must be able to access similar procurement support services across both City of York and North Yorkshire Council areas.	The strategy to improve supplier bidding skills should be completed in the next 12-18 months. The CA should monitor the number of organisations that are accessing its procurement support offer. The CA should also monitor the number of organisations that have accessed support and successfully go on to contract with the Authority.

YNYCA have a role a strategic role in influencing the procurement and social value approach of North Yorkshire Council and City of York Council.	Medium-term	The commission evaluates that YNYCA should implement a formal York and North Yorkshire community wealth building Statement of Commitment between the CA and the constituent Councils. The Statement of Commitment should include: • Data-sharing • Alignment of procurement and social value policies. The alignment of procurement and social value policies and procedures should result in a 'level playing field' across the region and hopefully make it easier for SMEs and VCSE organisations, from across the region, to access public sector procurement opportunities.	Within the next 12-18 months the CA and the two local authorities should have: • Agreed and signed a community wealth building Statement of Commitment • Aligned their procurement and social value policies.
YNYCA have a role a strategic role in influencing the procurement and social value approach of wider anchor partners within the region.	Medium-term	The commission recognises that the CA has ambitions to develop an anchor network across the region which would involve both public and private sector anchors. As with the constituent local authorities, the commission considers that YNYCA should implement a formal York and North Yorkshire Community Wealth Building Statement of Commitment between the CA and the anchor partners. The Statement of Commitment should include:- • Data-sharing • Alignment of procurement and social value policies.	Within the next 12-18 months the CA and they should have worked with anchor partners to: • Agree and sign a Community Wealth Building Statement of Commitment • Aligned their procurement and social value policies.
YNYCA should review how the commitment to community wealth building can be applied to additional areas of spend.	Medium-term	The CA should consider how the updated approach to procurement and social value can be applied in other areas of spend, for example: • Adding conditionalities to grant funding • Using grant conditionalities specifically to support non-extractive business models and to explore targeted business rate relief mechanisms for such models.	This review of the application of community wealth building commitments to wider areas of spend should be completed within the next 12-18 months.

Convening for economic and social change through anchor collaboration

After the initial 12 months the anchor network should develop its future ambitions and supporting impact framework.	Medium-term	Learning from the work undertaken to date the anchor network will need to develop and agree their future joint ambition for change, including: - Identifying the key actions that anchors can take forward (both individually and collectively). - Identifying areas of opportunity, such as: - Procurement - Employment - Trailblazer 2 - The Local Growth Fund - Pride in Place funding (Scarborough) - High streets fund - Prevention agenda - Rural economy The commission considers that the initial baseline data set should form the basis of an anchor network monitoring framework with annual public reporting. Core indicator domains should include procurement and commissioning spend percentages; Good Work/Living Wage Place progress; democratic ownership metrics; land and assets pipeline; finance milestones; and anchor network participation rates.	Documented evidence of next steps and delivery plans. Development of a monitoring framework. Both of the above should be completed within the next 12-14 months.
YNYCA should support the anchor network to develop an anchor network charter or terms of reference.	Medium-term	The above activities will support the development of a charter and/or terms of reference along with a shared set of values for the York and North Yorkshire anchor network. The charter/terms of reference should include: - A set of shared principles - Action-planning commitments - Data-sharing arrangements - Review timetable - Governance arrangements.	Production of an anchor charter/terms of reference within the next 18 months.

YNYCA should provide dedicated resource to support the development and successful implementation of an anchor network.	Medium-term	YNYCA should consider how a future anchor network will be coordinated and resourced. Time and capacity will be needed to ensure that meetings and actions continue. To ensure that this occurs we recommend that YNYCA provided dedicated staff resource to support the anchor network. This links to our action point which outlined the need for officer resource to progress community wealth building implementation.	Evidence of dedicated resource in place to support the network within the next 18 months.
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Widening access and improving service delivery through publicly owned transport

Action	Timeline	Next steps	Monitoring and evaluation
YNYCA should explore how it can secure funding to for the development of innovative transport pilot projects, particularly in rural communities.	Medium-term	There is renewed interest in community transport solutions, particularly where they can integrate with scheduled services or health services. There is an opportunity for innovative transport pilots to be developed. The projects could build on the findings/interim findings of: • The outcomes/ideas from the community transport summit • The 5 desk-based rural transport studies.	Reporting evidence that transport pilots have been considered; within the next 12 months. Number of pilot schemes developed within the next 12-24 months.
YNYCA should commit to exploring mass transit options and develop a business case on public, municipal, or co-operative bus delivery models.	Medium-term	YNYCA should commit to exploring mass transit options and develop a business case on public, municipal, or co-operative bus delivery models.	Documented commitment to exploring mass transit options, within the next 12 to 24 months. Evidence of business case/s for public, municipal, or co-operative bus delivery models, within the next 12 to 24 months.

2.3 Long-term actions

Action	Timeline	Next steps	Monitoring and evaluation
Retain the ambition to develop a municipally owned bus operator for York and North Yorkshire.	Long-term	The CWB Commission should retain the ambition to develop a municipally owned bus operator for York and North Yorkshire. YNYCA should include this longer-term strategic vision within the LTP.	Evidence of the ambition for a municipally owned bus operator within the LTP.

